



Nominee: Kevin Ray
Martin Luther King Branch
Cleveland, Ohio

Nominator: Anthony Dandridge

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award.

Mr. Ray comes into the branch every day with a unique passion for the library. He goes out of his way to make sure that not only the customers but the staff have a pleasurable library experience. His dedication to the library is second to none.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and made your experience.

Mr. Ray inspires me with his passion for the library. Through his dedication and positive energy he sets the tone for a positive work environment. With him on staff at the MLK branch as a lead worker he inspires the rest of the staff in providing an outstanding customer service experience.

3. How has the librarian made a difference in the community? Please be specific.

Mr. Ray does a lot of outreach in the community; from his visits to local day cares and his visit to the Juvenile Detention Center, Mr. Ray values all of the patrons within our service area, especially since he lives in the community. Mr. Ray has inspired some of our patrons not only to read, but to write through his Writing Workshop Series. As an aspiring author himself, he has been able to bring his experience to the community and inspire some of our local youth and co-workers to begin their own respective writing projects.

4. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

Mr. Ray has created a positive work environment within my branch. As a lead worker, Mr. Ray makes it enjoyable to come to work. Through his work ethic he has inspired me to uphold a certain standard of customer service in which we at the MLK branch love to deliver. Mr. Ray always reminds me of the importance of the customer and without them we would not exist. With this kind of dedication in the branch Mr. Ray brings a powerful presence to the MLK experience.

5. How does the nominee make the library a better place?

Mr. Ray is always coming up with unique programs for the youth at the MLK branch.

The youth never know what to expect, which is a good thing. I have seen him build roller coasters with the youth, inspire them to write, read and imagine a better world. He has a love for comic books and anime, which makes him very relatable to the youth as the MLK branch has a large comic book and anime fan base. Mr. Ray takes time out on a daily basis to sit down with the youth and ask them how their day was and he makes it a point to ask them what they are reading. It is because he takes his job personal that he brings such unique ideas to the branch. He wants people to discover the love of reading, just like his father did for him many years ago. Through my many conversations with Mr. Ray I can attest to his love for the library and what he does. He couldn't imagine doing anything else.

**Nominee: Kevin Ray
Martin Luther King Jr.
Cleveland, Ohio**

Nominator: Jacqueline Brackett

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award.

Kevin Ray, Children's Librarian at the Cleveland Public Library, Martin Luther King branch in Ohio deserves this award because he provides above-average services for our detained youth who are limited to the books on hand located within our school library. Mr. Ray is current with titles and series which the youth readily request. After his first visit, Mr. Ray knew specifically the interests of the youth and satisfied their reading "jones" with good books that stimulated their interest to explore new authors, titles, series and subject matter.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and made your experience.

Not to underestimate the library provided by the school located within the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center, Kevin Ray brings approximately 250 books on each visit to our secured facility. Those books are not available in our school library. Mr. Ray's experience in working with youth and his vast knowledge of books appealing to this population is refreshing. Kevin introduces our youth to genres, takes the time to ask them what their interests are and cheerfully challenges them to try out a book that's in circulation within the community. During his visits to each living unit, he's prepared with many genres and even brings in comic books for those who might not be into serious reading mode. Kevin offers suggestions for books to fit our age groups ranging from 12 to 21 years of age.

Mr. Ray has a pleasant demeanor and is easy to approach. The youth feel comfortable with him and appreciate his services. During his visits, they ask him, "When do you plan to return?" Because they're excited about their "special request" books he will order for them. They look forward to receiving the books. During Mr. Ray's visits, Joanne, 17 years old explained that she can explore more books than what is available in the Detention Center's library.

We have approximately 125 - 150 youth in our facility. While their reading levels may vary, the library services provided by Mr. Ray benefit everyone. Independent readers have a nice selection of books to choose from. If a low level reader requires a specific book, it can be ordered and delivered within a reasonable time frame. Volunteers providing book clubs and reading groups can request specific books without worrying about the quantity or using their own personal library cards.

One of the social workers encourages the youth in her care to read on a regular basis. Ms. Malone is very happy with the services provided by Mr. Ray. She shared the group reading sessions improve the social skills of the youth. Since there is an unlimited selection our youth can "request" a specific title or author. The interest in reading is higher and Mr. Ray's library services are very much needed and appreciated at the Juvenile Detention Center.

3. How has the librarian made a difference in the community? Please be specific.

In my opinion, Kevin Ray has made a "difference" in the community because he brings the books from "the" community to "our" community. Of course, he provides "Story Time" for learning centers and daycares along with other library activities.

He's making certain that our youth who are temporarily removed from "the" community are not isolated from exploring themselves through the world of literacy. This selfless act demonstrates Kevin's commitment to reach a population that might otherwise be underserved. I seek to prepare our youth with knowledge through the volunteers I recruit to provide programs and services that educate, motivate and empower.

What better way to help our youth to learn, grow and become aware of resources that benefit their development and help with better decision-making skills. Reading expands the mind, provides an invaluable and necessary skill to function within society. Even though our youth may be "temporarily" removed from their respective communities, they are still able to benefit from the services that only a community library can provide.

4. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

This is an example of how the Cleveland Public Library's Martin Luther King, Jr. branch and Kevin Ray, Children's Librarian has improved the quality of life for those who are in need of specific reading material and books to supplement tutoring services offered to our detained youth. Also, Mr. Ray has improved the quality of the Volunteer Services offered to our youth through the on-site monthly visits to the Juvenile Detention Center.

Attached is a letter sent by a tutor on behalf of one of the youth formerly detained in our secured facility. When the tutor requested a particular book for this young man, I was able to obtain it via the services of Kevin Ray. Upon my request, Mr. Ray promptly secured the book and made it available for the next scheduled tutoring session Lori had with Edward.

The tutor thought "The Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats might be exciting, fun and easy to read. I'm grateful we have access to the Cleveland Public Library resources through Mr. Ray's accessibility and volunteer services at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center.

The letter reads as follows:

Honorable Judge Thomas F. O'Malley
Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court
9300 Quincy Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44115

August 7, 2013

Dear Judge O'Malley,

I am a volunteer tutor with the Positive Education Initiative (PEI) program of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. I began to tutor Edward, who currently resides in the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center, on July 3, 2013. We have worked together twice a week since then. It is my understanding that I was assigned to Edward because he explicitly asked his teacher if someone could teach him to read. In my opinion, Edward is sincere in his desire to learn to read. Edward's reading level is quite low, probably around a first grade level. Although I am not a teacher or trained as a reading specialist, I have a friend who is an expert in the Wilson reading method. This involves tapping out words, tracing words, repeating words out loud, and using as many senses as possible to learn new concepts. I copied a few worksheets from her handbook on some of the basic word pronunciation rules. For example, when there is an le at the end of a word (like in example), the e is silent. As you can imagine, there are many rules and all of these rules have exceptions. In addition to this work, we do timed readings. I give Edward one minute to read a passage from our workbook. After we do some pronunciation and spelling work, he rereads the same passage again. His rate of reading improves every time. I do believe Edward is retaining much of what we go over and he is focused and working hard for a full hour every time we meet. We use a non-fiction reading workbook and Edward is delighted as he learns new concepts: seahorses, mammals, the solar system. At the end of our session, I read a couple of chapters aloud from a LeBron James biography. Edward very much enjoys this. It is my fondest wish that Edward learn to read. To best accomplish this, Edward would be tutored daily with someone trained in the Wilson reading method. To learn to read at age seventeen requires patience, tenacity, ambition, courage. Edward has had to start at the very beginning: learning vowels, consonants, syllables, paragraphs. There are no shortcuts here. This task is long, tedious, and difficult.

Very truly yours,

Lori Wald Compton

cc: Jacquelyn Brackett

5. How does the nominee make the library a better place?

Judith Jordet said, "Reading is a powerful tool for people in every walk of life, but it takes on special significance for inmates. Reading books not only builds their knowledge and vocabulary, but it also develops their capacity for internal reflection -- a crucial skill often lacking among criminals."

Kevin Ray, Children's Librarian, Cleveland Public Library, Martin Luther King, Jr. Branch believes the youth at the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center, Detention

Center are just as important as any of the youth that he serves "in" the community. He wants them to be as excited about reading as he is. It gives him great pleasure to provide his services at our secured facility and share his love of books with the youth. When Mr. Ray rolls the cart down the hallway and stops on the living unit and begins unloading the gray containers holding the books, it is at this point where he becomes a disseminator of the past, present and the future.

I say this because the books hold a key to the past, aspirations for the present and dreams for the future. Books can restore our humanity, broaden our perspectives, and take us to places we've never been before. Books can restore hope and reveal to us how people have moved forward despite the odds against them.

This past summer, I initiated a summer reading club with the 16 - 17 year old boys. They truly enjoyed the book selections Mr. Ray provided. Ms. Cohn, Book Club Facilitator was overjoyed with the response from the youth and offered to start a 2nd group because of the enthusiasm shown by her participants. Again, this was made possible by Kevin Ray's service to "our" community. He makes the library a better place because he "brings" the library to our incarcerated youth. He dispels limitations and makes library services accessible to an underserved population.

For these reasons, I nominate Kevin Ray who is worthy and deserving of the "I Love My Librarian Award." He enables our youth to connect to that moment where they are once again back in "the" community.

Nominee: Kevin Ray
Martin Luther King Branch
Cleveland, Ohio

Nominator: Niquan Badgette

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award.

Kevin Ray is somewhat friendly for an adult worker of his stature. He goes out of most reaches that a normal librarian wouldn't go when it comes to the youth member of youth. He tries seriously to encourage the youth to achieve a better lifestyle and overall goals and ambitions. Most librarians don't communicate and take the time to see the potential in every individual that walks into the library.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and made your experience.

I am currently working on a major project for my future career and Kevin Ray has been very helpful. Whenever I need his help, he gives his best to find what I need to progress with it. By helping me search for books, and check for opportunities that may be around in Cleveland, to help me better myself and or progress in my potential career.

3. How has the librarian made a difference in the community? Please be specific.

He has offered a number of activities to the youth and elder community in the library by seizing the potential talent and broadcasting everyone's individual abilities. For example, he's always optimistic about everything, he tries to keep a good vibe in and throughout the library's foundation. He provides side events for the youth, since all I can speak of is on our behalf, by providing movie based events then relating the scenario or movie or whatever event he does, to something in relation to something current.

4. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

The library is a place where I have come to love. I have been here almost every day I can to spend time with people, that have also come to love this library. Kevin helps to make things more enjoyable, but as we should be quiet in the library, he installs order to the groups of people that act out from time to time.

5. How does the nominee make the library a better place?

Kevin knows how to organize, keep order, involve people, and create a welcoming vibe for the people at the library. It's has been a lot of fun since coming to this library and meeting Kevin Ray.

Nominee: Kevin Ray
Martin Luther King
Cleveland, Ohio

Nominator: Gregory Jones

1. Please tell us in 2-3 sentences why your nominee should win this award.

Mr. Ray is extremely interactive and engaging with our children. He has gone above and beyond to bring multiple learning activities to our center that have been fun. Our children really enjoy his visits. He gives storytime a new meaning. The books that he brings tie into various seasonal themes. He becomes "one" of the children to keep them entertained.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and made your experience.

Many of the children at our daycare center are from the inner city. They don't have many opportunities to visit a library because of barriers like not having transportation or because they come from single parent homes where the sole provider for the family works and or goes to school. The days not spent at home or in school, are spent at the daycare. Mr. Ray brings the library to the children. He brings books to loan to the center and he brings stories to read and activities for the children to participate in. When we were about to take the children to the Martin Luther King Branch of the library, Mr. Ray took them on a tour of the library, and signed them up to get library cards. The children were able to get books to read and to use the libraries computers for educational games.

3. How has the librarian made a difference in the community? Please be specific.

Mr. Ray has made a difference to this inner city community by volunteering his time at our center. He comes to the center every two weeks. Improving the quality of life of these children by introducing literature as made all the difference. Many of our younger children are just learning to read. Mr. Ray brings his stories to live. It is difficult to keep 20 3-5 years olds entertained and quiet. Mr. Ray accomplishes this through the 2-3 books that he brings during each visit. He also brings audio equipment so that our children can do some interpretive movements through dancing.

4. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

It is not often that you find a person who so readily volunteers. Mr. Ray has gone above and beyond to contact us to schedule visits when we have been a little too busy to schedule one. I really appreciate the fact that he is so willing to give back to our children, and in a sense to pay it forward by helping us invest in their futures and to help us shape their lives.

5. How does the nominee make the library a better place?

Mr. Ray makes the library a better place by making it a warm and an inviting place. A

place where the children know that they can learn in a safe environment. He shares library events with our families. The library is not only in the neighborhood... it is a part of the neighborhood in that it has become a vehicle through which many of our children are socialized. A place where they learn, study and research.